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AFGHANISTAN

Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI)

SUCCESS STORY

Women Take A Stand Against Violence

CCI partnered with the Department of Women's Affairs to educate the men and women of Kandahar City about women's rights.



The Director of the Department of Women's Affairs inaugurates the event.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women made an important statement about GIRoA's priorities and commitment to the education and safety of the women in its' communities.

During the autumn of 2008, Malalai Kakar, the Head of the Kandahar Police Department's Crimes against Women Unit, was assassinated by the Taliban. Beyond her representation of the Kandahar Police Department, Malalai's personal choices to represent women in her community and leave her home to go to work became a threatening political statement that incited violence. In Kandahar Province, women who choose to attend school or work outside the home take personal risks every day. It is in this context that Kandahar's Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) partnered with the USAID/OTI-funded Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) to increase community awareness of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

On November 25, more than 450 women and 40 men from across Kandahar City met at a provincial government facility. The aim of the meeting was to educate the attendees about the situation of women in Kandahar City and the impact of domestic violence on their lives. The fact that such a large number of women gathered in a public place highlights the importance of the event to local women and its success.

Throughout the event, influential members of Kandahar City's government, including the Head of the Department of Women's Affairs, cited examples from the Holy Quran, Hadith and the Constitution of Afghanistan that women have the right to take a stand against violence. One of CCI's programming goals is to encourage community-government linkages; to this end, participants were encouraged to work with their local government to seek assistance, in continuing their education or if they are a victim of violence.

"This event provided a good opportunity for women to be more aware of their social and human rights and to understand the role that the Afghan Government plays in their lives," stated the principal of a local high school for girls. The participants viewed the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women as a critical step towards improving the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the government in Kandahar, in particular the DoWA.